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## The Fairy Tale of the Grand Muftis Servant

—OR—

## THE BITER BIT

Once upon a time in the long ago—at least that is the way all fairy tales begin, and as this is a fairy tale, we suppose it must begin that way, although, we are not sure of the chronological accuracy of the statement—there was an Eastern city of great renown in the production of sugar, mosquitoes, and rogues. Now in this city there dwelt two warring sects variously described as the Mish Nayrees and the Anti Mish Nayrees. At the time, our tale begins the Mish Nayrees, otherwise, Beni Stevens or sons of—well Mish Nayrees had their foes the Anti Mish Nayrees by means of foreign assistance wrested the power from, and governed their foes with a heavy hand—that is heavy with gold wrung from the plundered taxpayers who were all of the Anti Mish Nayree sect, and objected strongly to their hard-earned money going into the pouches and stomachs of the chief saints of the Mish Nayrees and their hireling foreign mercenaries. But this is by the way. Now in the former days when the Mish Nayrees were out of power and place, their scribes and pharisees but especially their scribes had railed and wept exceedingly sore, and declared that the Grand Mufti of the police was a rogue, and his department a den of thieves and robbers, and that it was a scandal to all good religion and government, and when by fraud and violence they had succeeded in ousting the Anti Mish Nayrees their scribes publicly rejoiced and wrote long articles to show that now the blessing of Heaven had descended on the nation, and that the Grand Mufti and the police department would be pure as the Angels of God—also much more frequently visible than they when on duty. But strange as it may seem the first two Grand Muftis proved themselves so unfitted for association with the Chief Pharisees of the Mish Nayrees that they retired speedily and joined the ranks of the Anti-Mish Nayrees, and the scribes once more rejoiced and howled, and wrote long screeds to prove that there was but one W. O. S. (Wily old scoundrel) and E. G. H. (ever green humbug) was his prophet, and the only one heavenborn Grand Mufti in the Nation. For had he not gained much shekels and praise by succeeding in his own province in exterminating the liquor traffic by driving from one district to another and back again, often enough to be able to give high rewards to his informers and spies, and yet in the manner of the Mish Nayrees with every pecuniarily profitable vice not destroy it so utterly that it would no longer afford him pleasure and amusement in chasing it and dallying with it, while at the same time drawing in the usual

Mish Nayrees manner good fat pay for suppressing it, and so it was done. And the new Grand Mufti whose gory locks were of crimson hue incarnadine mingled with the white of a purity which had not been sullied by contact with the rogues and thieves, liars and swindlers, opium-brodlers and extortioners, bribe-takers and ex-convicts with whom he surrounded himself as his assistants, said to himself now shall we have that pure and holy city the Mish Nayrees desire this to be. No scribe shall ever be able to scandalize this department, and straightway his subordinates robbed the opium of the government stored in a strong room in his office under his nose. Then held he his hands in horror and said, "Be chesm! on my head be it! I will guard this opium no more. If the anti-Mish Nayree Grand Mufti could do it for two years all right. It is not the business of the police to guard anything. I won't. My followers are too smart." So the remainder was removed to another place where neither thieves nor policemen break in and steal, but only Custom officers. And straightway the scribes of the Mish Nayree party wrote long and tediously to prove that these sons of guns of policemen (on whose heads be dirt,) who stole the opium were anti-Mish Nayree emissaries in disguise and plotted this to bring disgrace on the holy and pure administration of the Mish Nayrees. And so the tale went on. The Mish Nayree police department went on—bribes were taken, more were extorted, criminals were seldom detected or caught, when detected and if caught they generally escaped from custody, women were decoyed into gratifying the passions of policemen and then arrested for so doing, false plots were hatched and innocent men imprisoned.

And the abettors and actors in these strange things were upheld by the Mish Nayree Grand Mufti, and were not dismissed in ignominy, but if public opinion was too strong, and the act too glaring, the offender was *not pros'd* so as not to cause scandal by any undue public revelations. And Mish Nayrees and Anti Mish Nayrees alike held up their hands in awe and said, "truly great is W. O. S. and E. G. H. is his prophet indeed. Wonderful indeed are their ways, and great is the renown they bring to the Mish Nayrees and this nation. How long? O Lord! how long?"

Yet, one day to this city there arrived a mighty vessel with much wealth and produce of other nations to barter for the sugar and mosquitoes and rogues, which were the produce of the nation. And on board of her there abode one skilled in metal and machinery, and he had with him sundry fine metal boxes of brass (like unto that in the cheeks of the great W. O. S. and his prophet) to the number of

(Continued on fourth page.)